

Drew Archival Library turns 10

by Mary Schiess
Clipper Contributor



Patrick Browne, past DRHS executive director, describes the challenges involved in establishing the archival library.



Last Thursday's gathering at the Drew Archival Library at 147 St. George St. emphasized the role of past, present and future in

keeping history alive. The Sept. 14 evening event marked the 10th anniversary of the archives' establishment at a dedicated site. That meant a celebration of the 1909 Wright Building at 147 St. George St., the celebration of the 1791 journey of Samuel Delano and John Kendrick into Japanese waters, and a celebration of the community, supporters and historians who envisioned and created the Drew Archival Library.

After welcomes from Chris Sherman, Duxbury Rural and Historical Society board president and Erin McGough, DRHS executive director, local historian Patrick Browne reminded the audience of the confluence of events that resulted in the repository for Duxbury's historical documents. After acknowledging and meeting the need for a new library, the town needed new tenants for the historic Wright Building, which formerly served as the town's library. Funds raised through the state's Community Preservation Act assisted the revitalization of the idle building. On March 29, 2004, Browne, then executive director of DRHS, heard the town was seeking tenants. The audience chuckled when Browne described his immediacy in filing a letter of intent. Browne recalls that it was a tough job for the town to restore the building and a tough job for the DRHS to convert it into the archives. He acknowledged the contributions of many to the project, especially the work of Lee Kennedy who was a crucial liaison during the renovation.

Three-and-a-half years later, the Drew Archival Library opened with a threefold vision: preservation, education and outreach. Browne wanted the library to be accessible. He wanted it



Lori Rohleder welcomes participants to the Sept. 14 lecture.

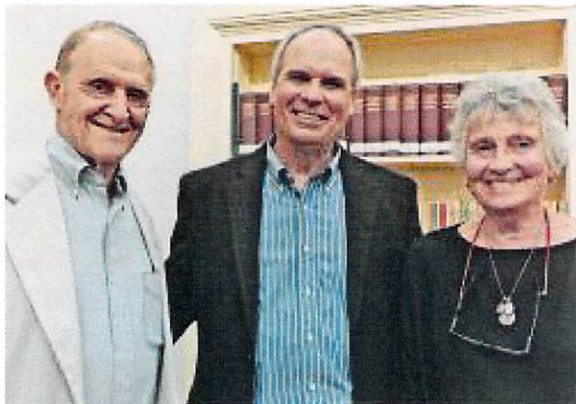
to be vibrant. As he reflects on the past 10 years, he sees that his expectations have become a reality.



James and Georgia Pye view images of before and after the renovation of the Wright Building to the Drew Archival Library.

archives. According to Ridley, the work at the archival library has a contemporary purpose as well as a historic purpose. This work can change attitudes and foster international communications.

In an area which counts anniversaries like 375 and 400 years, how best to realize the significance of 10 years? The answer was easy. Invite Scott Ridley, author of "Morning of Fire." Ridley's research lead him to the actual 1791 ship's log in Duxbury's archives. This document in the Drew Library verified fragmented information and documents which had suggested this encounter. It confirmed the meeting of Americans and Japanese in Japanese waters on May 1, 1771. Japanese researchers were equally pleased to find the information. The log book belonged to Duxbury's Samuel Delano Jr. (1769-1853) and was found when the grandfather of Sherman Hoyt purchased the home. Sherman and Diane Hoyt contributed the log and other documents to the



Author and presenter Scott Ridley poses with Sherman and Diane Hoyt before the presentation. The Hoyts' gift of a ship's log enabled Ridley's research.



Historians gather. Tony Kelso, current town and Carolyn Ravenscroft, DRHS archivist, have a moment together.

Photos by Mary Schiess